



# COPS Fact Sheet

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COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

## Value-Based Initiative and Value-Based Reentry Initiative

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) funds a wide variety of projects designed to strengthen the relationships between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. COPS' Value-Based Initiative (VBI) and Value-Based Reentry Initiative (VBRI) fund projects that partner law enforcement agencies with faith-based organizations and other community groups. COPS has invested more than \$5.5 million in VBI and VBRI projects all over the country since 2000.

- Institute of Contemporary Studies, Oakland, CA
- New Commandment Baptist Church/Jobs Partnership of Greater Washington, Washington, DC
- Boston Police Department, Boston, MA

Under the Value-Based Initiative, 15 law enforcement agencies were funded to build and expand relationships with faith-based and community-based groups to forge unprecedented partnerships within their local communities to focus on a variety of community concerns.

*"We're not necessarily*

*going to agree on*

*everything, but at least in*

*Fort Wayne we can sit*

*down and talk about it.*

*That trust level is*

*important. To make*

*community policing work,*

*you have to share the*

*power."*

*Chief Rusty York,  
Fort Wayne Police Department*

The VBI provides the start-up resources to develop a local program and create the infrastructure to implement it. A successful VBI program is designed from its inception to sustain strong lasting partnerships and establish local capacity to sustain the initiative beyond federal funding. VBI sites should serve as model programs built on the principles of community policing that other communities can replicate.

In 2003, COPS expanded its VBI program to include the new Value-Based Reentry Initiative. Under the VBRI, five sites from around the country have been selected to serve as national models that can be replicated by others seeking to create their own reentry programs. The VBRI program will be another element in the effort to create safer, healthier communities by working toward the successful integration of the ex-offender back into the community through a partnership approach.

As part of the VBRI program, mentors will be selected from faith-based and other community organizations. Mentor teams will then be trained to serve as the liaison between the returning offender and various resources and services, including housing, employment, health, and mental health. Training will also include the specific skills needed to work effectively with the offender community.

The five organizations participating in the COPS Value-Based Reentry Initiative are:

- Connections to Success, Kansas City, MO
- Transition of Prisoners, Detroit, MI

### Boston, Massachusetts

In Boston, the focus is on the successful integration of ex-offenders back into the community. The VBI brings together four faith-based organizations to partner with the Boston Police Department, mentoring and monitoring high-risk ex-offenders as they return to their neighborhoods.

Early results are promising, with both a reduction in the number of individuals re-offending, and a major reduction in the seriousness of the crime when there is a new offense.

### Chicago, Illinois

An alliance between the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) and the Chicago Police Department puts VBI funding to work through town-hall meetings and discussions. The VBI action plan includes a series of dialogues designed to address the root causes of issues that divide minority communities.

### Fort Wayne, Indiana

Joining forces with Stop the Madness, a Fort Wayne youth development program, police utilize VBI funding to create an alliance to curb antisocial trends. A ministers' training academy also works with law enforcement to positively impact the community. Fort Wayne also focuses on the challenge of reentry, pairing mentors from the faith community with ex-offenders.

COPS offers a variety of publications, products, and training opportunities to advance community policing and support its grant programs. COPS publications and products offer insights and experiences from others in the field addressing specific problems including:

- ✓ Creative Partnerships: Supporting Youth, Building Communities
- ✓ Law Enforcement Technology Guide: How to plan, purchase and manage technology (successfully!)
- ✓ Bringing Victims into Community Policing
- ✓ Promising Strategies from the Field: Spotlight on Sheriffs

COPS also sponsors training opportunities and conferences to give law enforcement professionals an opportunity to learn, network, and exchange ideas. All COPS publications and training opportunities are posted at COPS Online at [www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov).

### **Fort Worth, Texas**

Charged with creating a VBI system that encourages the movement of target communities into the city's mainstream, the Fort Worth Police Department teamed with Ministers Against Crime to take on community problems and conduct regular classes through the Ministers Police Academy.

### **Redlands, California**

The Redlands VBI brings the faith community into the criminal justice system through the local "Cops and Clergy Network." This network facilitates the faith community's work with regional police agencies and has been so successful that its efforts have expanded beyond the immediate region.

### **St. Paul, Minnesota**

This VBI sponsors three Safe Haven Community Learning Centers to provide a supportive environment for area youth during critical after-school hours.

### **New Haven, Connecticut**

The New Haven Police Department partners with Empower New Haven to focus on a number of important issues to the community, particularly at-risk youth and youth violence.

### **Riverside, California**

The Riverside Police Department, through its VBI program, created six "safe havens" for at-risk youth located at faith-based organizations throughout the city. Each site provides mentoring, life skills training, tutoring, and parenting classes.

### **St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana**

The St. Bernard Parish Sheriff's Office expanded its Citizens Police Academy and developed a Ministers Police Academy and a Students Police Academy. The goals are to both further the concepts of community policing and build a bridge between groups that have not always connected in a positive way.

### **San Bernardino, California**

The San Bernardino Police Department partners with numerous community groups and faith-based organization and places a

particular emphasis on juvenile offenders and the homeless. A Juvenile Offenders Mentoring program and a training program for Clergy on Crisis Intervention Skills are underway.

### **Richmond, Virginia**

The Richmond Police Chaplain Academies are a joint effort between the Richmond Police Department and area faith groups. Graduates of the Academy work with the community to reduce both crime and the fear of crime.

### **Portland, Oregon**

The Portland Police Bureau implemented a Dialogue Circles program that examines the issues dividing area residents and works toward resolving them. This model of collaborative dialogue between police officers and members of the faith community can be replicated in other areas.

### **Broward County, Florida**

The Broward County Sheriff's Office partners with area faith groups to mentor young women at risk. This program includes training in general life skills, job skills, drug abuse prevention, and academic skills.

### **Washington, D.C.**

The Metropolitan Police Department established Clergy Response Teams which respond to the scene of traumatic incidents and provide services to victims, witnesses, and their families.

### **Kansas City, Kansas**

The Kansas City Police Department expanded its Kansas City Together initiative—designed to bridge barriers between the community and the police—by incorporating faith partners into the process.

### **Contact COPS**

For more information on COPS VBI or VBRI please contact the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 1.800.421.6770, or visit COPS Online at [www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov).